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James JOYCE

Collected POEMS

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POEMS

ALSO BY JAMES JOYCE

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COLLECTION

The Portable James Joyce

COLLECTED POEMS

JAMES JOYCE

New York

THE VIKING PRESS

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CHAMBER MUSIC

9 *to* 44

POMES PENYEACH

47 *to* 59

ECCE PUER

63

CHAMBER MUSIC

I

Strings in the earth and air
  Make music sweet;
Strings by the river where
  The willows meet.

There's music along the river
  For Love wanders there,
Pale flowers on his mantle,
  Dark leaves on his hair.

All softly playing,
  With head to the music bent,
And fingers straying
  Upon an instrument.

II

The twilight turns from amethyst
To deep and deeper blue,
The lamp fills with a pale green glow
The trees of the avenue.

The old piano plays an air,
Sedate and slow and gay;
She bends upon the yellow keys,
Her head inclines this way.

Shy thoughts and grave wide eyes and hands
That wander as they list—
The twilight turns to darker blue
With lights of amethyst.

III

At that hour when all things have repose,
O lonely watcher of the skies,
Do you hear the night wind and the sighs
Of harps playing unto Love to unclose
The pale gates of sunrise?

When all things repose do you alone
Awake to hear the sweet harps play
To Love before him on his way,
And the night wind answering in antiphon
Till night is overgone?

Play on, invisible harps, unto Love,
Whose way in heaven is aglow
At that hour when soft lights come and go,
Soft sweet music in the air above
And in the earth below.

IV

When the shy star goes forth in heaven
All maidenly, disconsolate,
Hear you amid the drowsy even
One who is singing by your gate.
His song is softer than the dew
And he is come to visit you.

O bend no more in revery
When he at eventide is calling,
Nor muse: Who may this singer be
Whose song about my heart is falling?
Know you by this, the lover's chant,
'Tis I that am your visitant.

V

Lean out of the window,
Goldenhair,
I heard you singing
A merry air.

My book was closed;
I read no more,
Watching the fire dance
On the floor.

I have left my book,
I have left my room,
For I heard you singing
Through the gloom.

Singing and singing
A merry air,
Lean out of the window,
Goldenhair.

VI

I would in that sweet bosom be
(O sweet it is and fair it is!)
Where no rude wind might visit me.
Because of sad austerities
I would in that sweet bosom be.

I would be ever in that heart
(O soft I knock and soft entreat her!)
Where only peace might be my part.
Austerities were all the sweeter
So I were ever in that heart.

VII

My love is in a light attire
  Among the apple-trees,
Where the gay winds do most desire
  To run in companies.

There, where the gay winds stay to woo
  The young leaves as they pass,
My love goes slowly, bending to
  Her shadow on the grass;

And where the sky's a pale blue cup
  Over the laughing land,
My love goes lightly, holding up
  Her dress with dainty hand.

VIII

Who goes amid the green wood
With springtide all adorning her?
Who goes amid the merry green wood
To make it merrier?

Who passes in the sunlight
By ways that know the light footfall?
Who passes in the sweet sunlight
With mien so virginal?

The ways of all the woodland
Gleam with a soft and golden fire—
For whom does all the sunny woodland
Carry so brave attire?

O, it is for my true love
The woods their rich apparel wear—
O, it is for my own true love,
That is so young and fair.

IX

Winds of May, that dance on the sea,
Dancing a ring-around in glee
From furrow to furrow, while overhead
The foam flies up to be garlanded,
In silvery arches spanning the air,
Saw you my true love anywhere?
Welladay! Welladay!
For the winds of May!
Love is unhappy when love is away!

X

Bright cap and streamers,
He sings in the hollow:
Come follow, come follow,
All you that love.
Leave dreams to the dreamers
That will not after,
That song and laughter
Do nothing move.

With ribbons streaming
He sings the bolder;
In troop at his shoulder
The wild bees hum.
And the time of dreaming
Dreams is over—
As lover to lover,
Sweetheart, I come.

XI

Bid adieu, adieu, adieu,
Bid adieu to girlish days,
Happy Love is come to woo
Thee and woo thy girlish ways—
The zone that doth become thee fair,
The snood upon thy yellow hair.

When thou hast heard his name upon
The bugles of the cherubim
Begin thou softly to unzone
Thy girlish bosom unto him
And softly to undo the snood
That is the sign of maidenhood.

XII

What counsel has the hooded moon
  Put in thy heart, my shyly sweet,
Of Love in ancient plenilune,
  Glory and stars beneath his feet—
A sage that is but kith and kin
With the comedian Capuchin?

Believe me rather that am wise
  In disregard of the divine,
A glory kindles in those eyes,
  Trembles to starlight. Mine, O Mine!
No more be tears in moon or mist
For thee, sweet sentimentalist.

XIII

Go seek her out all courteously,
And say I come,
Wind of spices whose song is ever
Epithalamium.
O, hurry over the dark lands
And run upon the sea
For seas and land shall not divide us
My love and me.

Now, wind, of your good courtesy
I pray you go,
And come into her little garden
And sing at her window;
Singing: The bridal wind is blowing
For Love is at his noon;
And soon will your true love be with you,
Soon, O soon.

XIV

My dove, my beautiful one,
Arise, arise!
The night-dew lies
Upon my lips and eyes.

The odorous winds are weaving
A music of sighs:
Arise, arise,
My dove, my beautiful one!

I wait by the cedar tree,
My sister, my love.
White breast of the dove,
My breast shall be your bed.

The pale dew lies
Like a veil on my head.
My fair one, my fair dove,
Arise, arise!

XV

From dewy dreams, my soul, arise,
From love's deep slumber and from death,
For lo! the trees are full of sighs
Whose leaves the morn admonisheth.

Eastward the gradual dawn prevails
Where softly-burning fires appear,
Making to tremble all those veils
Of grey and golden gossamer.

While sweetly, gently, secretly,
The flowery bells of morn are stirred
And the wise choirs of faery
Begin (innumerous!) to be heard.

XVI

O cool is the valley now
And there, love, will we go
For many a choir is singing now
Where Love did sometime go.
And hear you not the thrushes calling,
Calling us away?
O cool and pleasant is the valley
And there, love, will we stay.

XVII

Because your voice was at my side
I gave him pain,
Because within my hand I held
Your hand again.

There is no word nor any sign
Can make amend—
He is a stranger to me now
Who was my friend.

XVIII

O Sweetheart, hear you
Your lover's tale;
A man shall have sorrow
When friends him fail.

For he shall know then
Friends be untrue
And a little ashes
Their words come to.

But one unto him
Will softly move
And softly woo him
In ways of love.

His hand is under
Her smooth round breast;
So he who has sorrow
Shall have rest.

XIX

Be not sad because all men
Prefer a lying clamour before you:
Sweetheart, be at peace again—
Can they dishonour you?

They are sadder than all tears;
Their lives ascend as a continual sigh.
Proudly answer to their tears:
As they deny, deny.

XX

In the dark pine-wood
I would we lay,
In deep cool shadow
At noon of day.

How sweet to lie there,
Sweet to kiss,
Where the great pine-forest
Enaisled is!

Thy kiss descending
Sweeter were
With a soft tumult
Of thy hair.

O, unto the pine-wood
At noon of day
Come with me now,
Sweet love, away.

XXI

He who hath glory lost, nor hath
  Found any soul to fellow his,
Among his foes in scorn and wrath
  Holding to ancient nobleness,
That high unconsortable one—
His love is his companion.

XXII

Of that so sweet imprisonment
My soul, dearest, is fain—
Soft arms that woo me to relent
And woo me to detain.
Ah, could they ever hold me there
Gladly were I a prisoner!

Dearest, through interwoven arms
By love made tremulous,
That night allures me where alarms
Nowise may trouble us;
But sleep to dreamier sleep be wed
Where soul with soul lies prisoned.

XXIII

This heart that flutters near my heart
  My hope and all my riches is,
Unhappy when we draw apart
  And happy between kiss and kiss;
My hope and all my riches—yes!—
And all my happiness.

For there, as in some mossy nest
  The wrens will divers treasures keep,
I laid those treasures I possessed
  Ere that mine eyes had learned to weep.
Shall we not be as wise as they
Though love live but a day?

XXIV

Silently she's combing,
  Combing her long hair,
Silently and graciously,
  With many a pretty air.

The sun is in the willow leaves
  And on the dappled grass,
And still she's combing her long hair
  Before the looking-glass.

I pray you, cease to comb out,
  Comb out your long hair,
For I have heard of witchery
  Under a pretty air,

That makes as one thing to the lover
  Staying and going hence,
All fair, with many a pretty air
  And many a negligence.

XXV

Lightly come or lightly go:
  Though thy heart presage thee woe,
Vales and many a wasted sun,
  Oread, let thy laughter run,
Till the irreverent mountain air
Ripple all thy flying hair.

Lightly, lightly — ever so:
  Clouds that wrap the vales below
At the hour of evenstar
  Lowliest attendants are;
Love and laughter song-confessed
When the heart is heaviest.

XXVI

Thou leanest to the shell of night,
Dear lady, a divining ear.
In that soft choiring of delight
What sound hath made thy heart to fear?
Seemed it of rivers rushing forth
From the grey deserts of the north?

That mood of thine, O timorous,
Is his, if thou but scan it well,
Who a mad tale bequeaths to us
At ghosting hour conjurable—
And all for some strange name he read
In Purchas or in Holinshed.

XXVII

Though I thy Mithridates were,
  Framed to defy the poison-dart.
Yet must thou fold me unaware
  To know the rapture of thy heart,
And I but render and confess
The malice of thy tenderness.

For elegant and antique phrase,
  Dearest, my lips wax all too wise;
Nor have I known a love whose praise
  Our piping poets solemnize,
Neither a love where may not be
Ever so little falsity.

XXVIII

Gentle lady, do not sing
Sad songs about the end of love;
Lay aside sadness and sing
How love that passes is enough.

Sing about the long deep sleep
Of lovers that are dead, and how
In the grave all love shall sleep:
Love is aweary now.

XXIX

Dear heart, why will you use me so?
  Dear eyes that gently me upbraid,
Still are you beautiful—but O,
  How is your beauty raimented!

Through the clear mirror of your eyes,
  Through the soft cry of kiss to kiss,
Desolate winds assail with cries
  The shadowy garden where love is.

And soon shall love dissolved be
  When over us the wild winds blow—
But you, dear love, too dear to me,
  Alas! why will you use me so?

XXX

Love came to us in time gone by
When one at twilight shyly played
And one in fear was standing nigh—
For Love at first is all afraid.

We were grave lovers. Love is past
That had his sweet hours many a one;
Welcome to us now at the last
The ways that we shall go upon.

XXXI

O, it was out by Donnycarney
When the bat flew from tree to tree
My love and I did walk together;
And sweet were the words she said to me.

Along with us the summer wind
Went murmuring—O, happily!—
But softer than the breath of summer
Was the kiss she gave to me.

XXXII

Rain has fallen all the day.
O come among the laden trees:
The leaves lie thick upon the way
Of memories.

Staying a little by the way
Of memories shall we depart.
Come, my beloved, where I may
Speak to your heart.

XXXIII

Now, O now, in this brown land
  Where Love did so sweet music make
We two shall wander, hand in hand,
  Forbearing for old friendship' sake,
Nor grieve because our love was gay
Which now is ended in this way.

A rogue in red and yellow dress
  Is knocking, knocking at the tree;
And all around our loneliness
  The wind is whistling merrily.
The leaves—they do not sigh at all
When the year takes them in the fall.

Now, O now, we hear no more
  The villanelle and roundelay!
Yet will we kiss, sweetheart, before
  We take sad leave at close of day.
Grieve not, sweetheart, for anything—
The year, the year is gathering.

XXXIV

Sleep now, O sleep now,
O you unquiet heart!
A voice crying "Sleep now"
Is heard in my heart.

The voice of the winter
Is heard at the door.
O sleep, for the winter
Is crying "Sleep no more."

My kiss will give peace now
And quiet to your heart—
Sleep on in peace now,
O you unquiet heart!

XXXV

All day I hear the noise of waters
Making moan,
Sad as the sea-bird is, when going
Forth alone,
He hears the winds cry to the waters'
Monotone.

The grey winds, the cold winds are blowing
Where I go.
I hear the noise of many waters
Far below.
All day, all night, I hear them flowing
To and fro.

XXXVI

I hear an army charging upon the land,
And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their knees:
Arrogant, in black armour, behind them stand,
Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the charioteers.

They cry unto the night their battle-name:
I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.

They come shaking in triumph their long, green hair:
They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.
My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair?
My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone?

POMES

PENYEACH

TILLY

He travels after a winter sun,
Urging the cattle along a cold red road,
Calling to them, a voice they know,
He drives his beasts above Cabra.

The voice tells them home is warm.
They moo and make brute music with their hoofs.
He drives them with a flowering branch before
him,
Smoke pluming their foreheads.

Boor, bond of the herd,
Tonight stretch full by the fire!
I bleed by the black stream
For my torn bough!

WATCHING THE NEEDLEBOATS AT SAN SABBA

I heard their young hearts crying
Loveward above the glancing oar
And heard the prairie grasses sighing:
No more, return no more!

O hearts, O sighing grasses,
Vainly your loveblown bannerets mourn!
No more will the wild wind that passes
Return, no more return.

A FLOWER GIVEN TO MY DAUGHTER

Frail the white rose and frail are
Her hands that gave
Whose soul is sere and paler
Than time's wan wave.

Rosefrail and fair—yet frailest
A wonder wild
In gentle eyes thou veilest,
My blueveined child.

SHE WEEPS OVER RAHOON

Rain on Rahoon falls softly, softly falling,
Where my dark lover lies.
Sad is his voice that calls me, sadly calling,
At grey moonrise.

Love, hear thou
How soft, how sad his voice is ever calling,
Ever unanswered and the dark rain falling,
Then as now.

Dark too our hearts, O love, shall lie and cold
As his sad heart has lain
Under the moongrey nettles, the black mould
And muttering rain.

TUTTO È SCIOLTO

A birdless heaven, seadusk, one lone star
Piercing the west,
As thou, fond heart, love's time, so faint, so far,
Rememberest.

The clear young eyes' soft look, the candid brow,
The fragrant hair,
Falling as through the silence falleth now
Dusk of the air.

Why then, remembering those shy
Sweet lures, repine
When the dear love she yielded with a sigh
Was all but thine?

ON THE BEACH AT FONTANA

Wind whines and whines the shingle,
The crazy pierstakes groan;
A senile sea numbers each single
Slimesilvered stone.

From whining wind and colder
Grey sea I wrap him warm
And touch his trembling fineboned shoulder
And boyish arm.

Around us fear, descending
Darkness of fear above
And in my heart how deep unending
Ache of love!

SIMPLES

O bella bionda,
Sei come l'onda!

Of cool sweet dew and radiance mild
The moon a web of silence weaves
In the still garden where a child
Gathers the simple salad leaves.

A moondew stars her hanging hair
And moonlight kisses her young brow
And, gathering, she sings an air:
Fair as the wave is, fair, art thou!

Be mine, I pray, a waxen ear
To shield me from her childish croon
And mine a shielded heart for her
Who gathers simples of the moon.

FLOOD

Goldbrown upon the sated flood
The rockvine clusters lift and sway.
Vast wings above the lambent waters brood
Of sullen day.

A waste of waters ruthlessly
Sways and uplifts its weedy mane
Where brooding day stares down upon the sea
In dull disdain.

Uplift and sway, O golden vine,
Your clustered fruits to love's full flood,
Lambent and vast and ruthless as is thine
Incertitude!

NIGHTPIECE

Gaunt in gloom,
The pale stars their torches,
Enshrouded, wave.
Ghostfires from heaven's far verges faint illume,
Arches on soaring arches,
Night's sindark nave.

Seraphim,
The lost hosts awaken
To service till
In moonless gloom each lapses muted, dim,
Raised when she has and shaken
Her thurible.

And long and loud,
To night's nave upsoaring,
A starknell tolls
As the bleak incense surges, cloud on cloud,
Voidward from the adoring
Waste of souls.

ALONE

The moon's greygolden meshes make
All night a veil,
The shorelamps in the sleeping lake
Laburnum tendrils trail.

The sly reeds whisper to the night
A name—her name—
And all my soul is a delight,
A swoon of shame.

A MEMORY OF THE PLAYERS IN A MIRROR AT MIDNIGHT

They mouth love's language. Gnash
The thirteen teeth
Your lean jaws grin with. Lash
Your itch and quailing, nude greed of the flesh.
Love's breath in you is stale, worded or sung,
As sour as cat's breath,
Harsh of tongue.

This grey that stares
Lies not, stark skin and bone.
Leave greasy lips their kissing. None
Will choose her what you see to mouth upon.
Dire hunger holds his hour.
Pluck forth your heart, saltblood, a fruit of
    tears.
Pluck and devour!

BAHNHOFSTRASSE

The eyes that mock me sign the way
Whereto I pass at eve of day,

Grey way whose violet signals are
The trysting and the twining star.

Ah star of evil! star of pain!
Highhearted youth comes not again

Nor old heart's wisdom yet to know
The signs that mock me as I go.

A PRAYER

Again!
Come, give, yield all your strength to me!
From far a low word breathes on the breaking brain
Its cruel calm, submission's misery,
Gentling her awe as to a soul predestined.
Cease, silent love! My doom!

Blind me with your dark nearness, O have mercy,
beloved enemy of my will!
I dare not withstand the cold touch that I dread.
Draw from me still
My slow life! Bend deeper on me, threatening head,
Proud by my downfall, remembering, pitying
Him who is, him who was!

Again!
Together, folded by the night, they lay on earth.
I hear
From far her low word breathe on my breaking
brain.
Come! I yield. Bend deeper upon me! I am here.
Subduer, do not leave me! Only joy, only anguish,
Take me, save me, soothe me, O spare me!

ECCE PUER

ECCE PUER

Of the dark past
A child is born
With joy and grief
My heart is torn

Calm in his cradle
The living lies.
May love and mercy
Unclose his eyes!

Young life is breathed
On the glass;
The world that was not
Comes to pass.

A child is sleeping:
An old man gone.
O, father forsaken,
Forgive your son!

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by JAMES JOYCE

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